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Economic and environmental questions: sustainable development

Letter dated 21 April 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the final report of the Pacific Regional Meeting to follow up implementation of the Mauritius Strategy held in Apia, from 17 to 19 October 2005 (see annex).

On behalf of the small island developing States participating in the meeting, I request that the attached report be issued as a document of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council. I further request that the document also be made available to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourteenth session.

(*Signed*) Ali'ioaiga Feturi **Elisaia**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 21 April 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Pacific Regional Meeting to follow up the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation

17-19 October 2005, Apia

Executive Summary

1. Political will and national ownership

- Collective cooperation and partnerships approach to implementation of the BPOA and MSI are essential.
- National understanding, ownership and political will to embrace, support and market the MSI is central to securing commitment from other partners at all levels to support it's implementation.

2. Importance of national sustainable development enabling environment

- Implementation of the MSI at the national level must be nationally driven and coordinated on an appropriate national platform to facilitate sustainable development. The support to these national level platforms must be at an absorptive rate that is reflective of the capacity within those mechanisms.
- Operationalizing the MSI at the National level requires effective integrated decision-making and planning environments. This was identified in the Pacific Position and was highlighted in the MSI. How to create these enabling environments and engage all the relevant stakeholders is a challenge and is an objective of all stakeholders.
- We need to use existing mechanisms where possible to operationalize the MSI at the national level; this may mean the need to improve current planning systems.
- The Tuvalu and Kiribati frameworks for developing and implementing their NSDS are good examples of building on existing planning processes that could be adopted for use in other SIDS.
- The importance of translating a NSDS or the like into the budgetary process is central to being able to implement the NSDS or development plan.
- The NSDS should facilitate and create partnerships and good guidelines to engage partners.
- UNDESA underscored the importance of the NSDS as a basis for facilitating sustainable development at the national level.
- NSDS should be viewed as a coordinated set of participatory and continuously evolving processes of analysis, debate, decision-making, capacity development, planning, investment, monitoring and evaluation which seek to integrate the short and long-term economic, social and environmental objectives of society through mutually supportive approaches wherever possible and managing trade offs where this is not possible.

- There should be a move from broad awareness of sustainable development through better coherence and coordination in the short term, to full integration of the three pillars of SD.
- A shift from government control of the SD agenda to greater engagement with stakeholders (at least partial engagement in the short term) and shared responsibility of implementation.
- A shift from sectoral approaches towards development to cross-sectoral approaches and ultimately to a fully balanced cross-sectoral approach is necessary.
- NSDS should be developed by national experts rather than by consultants because these consultants are often not responsible for implementation of the NSDS. Engagement and wide stakeholder ownership of the NSDS is also very important. NSDS consultation must thus be an exercise that is conducted and owned by government and the public.
- It was recommended that the PIF UN Missions should consult with Italy on how the NSDS project could be reprogrammed to take account of ongoing efforts in the region. Participants were also informed of the variety of regional and national efforts currently underway. In light of this information it would appear that the DESA support should best be directed towards the development and/or implementation of NSDS's or the like in accordance with the specific situation of each SIDS.
- Furthermore support should build on what has been achieved in the WSSD/MIM processes so as not to duplicate national efforts. This will require that the project be informed by, and closely implemented with, ongoing work of Pacific SIDS and their regional organizations, and that it specifically involve personnel already working on sustainable development national consultations at the national and regional levels. The Italy/DESA national sustainable development strategies should reflect these important considerations. It was also noted that a discussion with the project's management would have been beneficial for the meeting.

3. Strengthening national capacity

- It is very important to localize the MSI before trying to communicate it to people as many people don't understand what the MSI or BPoA are all about.
- It is crucial to help at least conceptually integrate all documents of international platforms relevant to sustainable development at the national level to operationalize them in a simple framework.
- Instead of worrying about operationalizing the MSI in its entirety at the national level the focus should be on operationalizing 'sustainable development' at the National level. The MSI is an international agreement that facilitates commitment from partners to help in a number of areas and this can be used to direct assistance to nationally identified sustainable development issues.
- To market the MSI locally and nationally, keep it simple and use people who have far reaching contacts and are able to communicate effectively.
- The crucial issue of capacity in SIDS is a major barrier to the implementation of sustainable development in SIDS. This varies between PICs and must be a key consideration in the approaches to the implementation of the MSI.

- Some selective practical initiatives must be implemented at the national level to show by example how to improve our resilience. While planning is important, actions speak louder than words and highlight practical examples of what we can change now and how we can progress sustainable development practically. The MSI should facilitate these kinds of initiatives. These practical examples will then highlight the best way for future planning having learnt this from these practical examples such as the biofuel initiative in Fiji.
- Energy security is a real issue facing Pacific SIDS and Fiji presented a good example of how they are restructuring and implementing a biofuel strategy to increase their resilience to rising fuel prices.
- Waste management is also a real issue that impacts on the health, environment and potential priority areas of development and the economy (such as tourism). Samoa presented their Waste Strategy and some of the practicalities in implementing and addressing their priorities as identified by public perception.
- Samoa's Waste Strategy has promoted partnerships between private sector, government and the public to address an important and pressing issue.
- Putting the cost of dealing with waste back on the producer and user of these products is important for sustainable funding of waste management. Currently the government pays for this service which is unsustainable but currently allows the government to stipulate what is not allowed in the waste stream that is collected e.g. plastic bags.

4. Importance of regional support and partnerships

- Joint implementation is important to reduce duplication and become more efficient in the way we engage our partners to deliver services and assistance to PICs. The Pacific Plan can improve this process along with efficient CROP working groups and regional partnerships.
- Having outlined the regional policies listed in the Pacific Plan and those priority areas in the MSI, it is clear where there are complementarities and where there are gaps.
- The importance of effective regional partnerships as a means to facilitate implementation and effective use of resources in different areas was emphasized.
- The value of the regional partnership is to allow for donors to focus on what is being implemented in the region and facilitates a more cooperative approach. It also highlights the proactive approach being taken by the region to address sustainable development priorities. But this requires the full engagement by the Pacific SIDS in international conferences and other opportunities. Partnerships also encourage a longer-term approach to the implementation process and can seek to facilitate a lessening of reporting requirements. A formal clearing house mechanism should also be strengthened.
- A number of best practice aspects of partnership implementation were highlighted during the presentations on updates of the Ocean, Nature Conservation and Water Management partnerships. Those best practices are summarized as follows.
    - Partnership must be based on a Regional Policy or agreement that has wide ownership and preferably endorsed by a regional governing council and/or the Leaders.

- A dedicated partnership facilitator is preferable.
- Wide representation of stakeholders on partnerships is important e.g. governments, donors, non-government donors and agencies, private sector.
- Formalized reporting and monitoring that is simple and easily accessible by the international, regional and national stakeholders.
- Strong links to national policy and delivery mechanisms.
- Should actively facilitate connection between national needs and regional and international resources and partners.
- Promote mainstreaming of the thematic issue into National Sustainable Development processes.
- Should consider the 3 dimensions of sustainable development, those being environment, social and economic factors.

- The development partners in the region informed that they view favourably the partnerships that fit in with other mechanisms in the region, and have supported a few key partnerships. They wish to see the practical applications on the ground. They recommended linking the work of the regional councils with efforts in New York, linking also the capital-based implementers and the overseas representatives. Significant bilateral agreements are also in place that could be utilized for promoting the national level sustainable development strategies in support of the MSI.
- It was agreed that the outcomes of the PIF be used to update the road map and then approach the various donors at upcoming opportunities to promote Pacific Partnerships and priorities in order to facilitate resourcing and engaging partners for implementation in some of these key areas.
- A key recommendation was made regarding the possibility of pooling of resources so that countries could promote national projects through regional programmes making it easier to access resources e.g. on priority issues such as sustainable water supply.
- For consistency there is a need also to ensure that SIDS representatives attending various meetings coordinate their interventions to ensure there are clear links between the Pacific Plan and the MSI, and the relevant themes are emphasized. This will ensure for example that decisions of the UNESCO general conference are informed by the priorities established by the Pacific Plan and MSI. This requires not only detailed statements but also active engagement in the working groups developing the final decisions.
- Consideration of entrusting a few delegations to represent the whole region at meetings with low representation should be considered. (e.g. as per Pacific representation in the GEF Governing Council).

5. Importance of international support and frameworks

- Clear simple, collaborative frameworks at the International level, in particular the UN systems linked to donors and other stakeholders, are necessary to effectively focus various programmes and assistance on priority issues under the MSI, including through an inter-agency consultative taskforce, UN Matrix for implementation of the MSI.

- There is good value in the comprehensive framework that is being developed, which outlines UN Agencies various programmes that could assist SIDS, including the establishment of the IACG. More importantly this information enables SIDS to strategically direct UN Agencies to provide further assistance through their programmes that focuses specifically on SIDS issues in the context of the MSI.
- In addition, there is a need to link the international level current and planned activities with the efforts at the Regional level in support of national activities. This can be facilitated by the linking of the matrices being developed by the IACG and the CROP SDWG as a form of a clearing house mechanism.
- The work of operationalization of the MSI will also need to be linked with the UNDP coordinated country programmes and consultative processes as well as to the planned donor harmonization consultations.
- There is a need to streamline and show the clear linkages between the UN and Pacific matrices as an important step in moving forward to ensure that there are not too many documents floating around without a framework that is comprehensive and which gives a clearer bigger picture of where everything sits.
- Further recommendations to expand the objectives of IACG to include advocacy of SIDS specific concerns in processes of the MEAs and MTAs.
- It was also noted that the need for the presence of the UN system on the ground in the under-served SIDS should be guided by the experience of the FAO projects, involving long-term placement of technical experts in the countries, which also sought to ensure the expert's familiarity with the region and the countries for most effective delivery of assistance.

6. Future engagement of the international community

- There is a need to develop a marketing plan that promotes the internationally agreed MSI at all levels as the blueprint for sustainable development of SIDS.
- The Rome Inter-regional SIDS meeting on MSI implementation offers an important opportunity to get clear commitment as to how donors will help SIDS implement the MSI through collaborative mechanisms. It is important in this regard for SIDS to show coordinated commitment at the national and regional levels to implementing the MSI at this meeting.
- UNDESA was urged to invite and ensure that donors are actively pursued to attend the Rome meeting.
- Identify a list of approved regional projects for which there may be new opportunities for funding and which the PIF UN Missions can market in NY and in the upcoming Rome Meeting.
- Some key opportunities identified included the following: the Rome Meeting, CSD, Post Forum Dialogue Partners discussion, GEF Governing Council, EDF10, COP of MEA's (e.g. upcoming opportunity at CBD – Island Biodiversity Programme of Work), WTO, and regional agency governing councils.

- There needs to be a concerted and urgent effort to support efforts of SIDS to bring the international community to translate the recognition of the SIDS special case into modalities of special treatment in the trade and economic fora. This requires in the first instance a step towards developing a clear definition of SIDS and some clear criteria for recognizing the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS by agencies such as the World Bank and WTO.
- Must actively try to ensure that the multilateral funding mechanisms are called on to reflect the MSI and the special case of SIDS.

7. Linkages and Issues relevant to CSD14-15

- CSD14 offers an opportunity to highlight the link between climate change, energy, atmosphere and industrial development through innovative options. If SIDS themselves show how biofuel can be a substitute to fossil fuel, this promotes to the international community options they can take to decrease the use of fossil fuels contributing to Climate Change.
- Energy is a key factor in the sustainable development of SIDS and their ability to continue to earn foreign exchange.
- Increasing our resilience to external factors such as oil prices requires innovation and examining some of our current practices and resources that could be used differently.
- Engaging research through SIDS-SIDS partnerships such as the University Consortium can facilitate sharing of experiences and appropriate technologies to promote biofuels.
- Pacific SIDS can learn from each other with the experiences that currently happen in each country. The use of biofuels in Vanuatu, Cook Islands, American Samoa is a good example of the feasibility of such initiatives and can only be improved through sharing experiences.
- There are many solutions within our region to sustainable use of resources and substitution for costly imported products and these need to be highlighted.
- There are many innovative ideas that need to be explored particularly through SIDS-SIDS cooperation.
- All Islands are different and one size does not fit all by way of innovative use of resources. There needs to be a process in place that examines the way things currently work and looks at the possibilities there are to change these traditional practices and become innovative to overcome the changing pressures facing us.

Enclosure 1
Summary of proceedings

The Pacific Regional Meeting to Follow-up Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy was convened in Samoa from 17 to 19 October 2005 at the Hotel Kitano Tusitala. The meeting was attended by Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Australia and New Zealand attended as observers. The following organizations were also represented: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP/POC), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the University of the South Pacific (USP).

Concern was raised by delegations at the absence of Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, given that Office's role of advocacy for SIDS. Concern was also raised regarding the difficulties encountered over the 2nd funded participant for the meeting.

The opening session was chaired by H.E. Ambassador Ali'ioaiga Feturi Elisaia, Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations, who was also elected Chairman of the Meeting. Ms. Anastacia Amoa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Samoa, was elected Rapporteur of the Meeting. PIFS and SIDS Unit provided the secretariat.

Session 1 – Setting the Scene
Introductory remarks were made by the PIFS Chair (Ambassador Ali'ioaiga Feturi Elisaia) on the main challenges and opportunities facing the Pacific region in the operationalization of Sustainable Development and implementation of the MSI. An introduction to the challenges at the international level was made by Diane Quarless, Chief, SIDS Unit, UNDESA. The regional challenges in the Pacific in Operationalizing the Mauritius Strategy was introduced by Padma Lal, (PIFS). This was followed by an open discussion of national level challenges. Statements were made by SOPAC, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Fiji, Tuvalu, Nauru, Samoa, FSM, Tonga and Timor-Leste.

Session 2 – International and Regional Support
a.) International Level: An introduction to the Global Programmes to Operationalize the MSI was presented by Diane Quarless, Chief SIDS Unit. Joyce Yu, the Resident Representative of UNDP presented the existing UN regional mechanisms in the Pacific. Statements were made by Solomon Islands, Fiji and USP.

b.) Regional Level: The Mauritius Matrix for Implementation in the Pacific in the context of the Pacific Plan and regional policies and partnerships was presented by Amena Yauvoli, sustainable development Advisor SPREP. Statements were made by UNCTAD, ESCAP, Papua New Guinea, PIFS, SOPAC, Tonga, Timor-Leste and Samoa.

Session 3 - Country Presentations
Consideration of national mechanisms and frameworks for most effective implementation of the BPOA/MSI, and strategies to meet the monitoring and reporting obligations of the BPOA/MSI and other development platforms such as the MDGs. Statements were made by Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea, ESCAP, Kiribati, Timor-Leste, Tonga and DESA.

Session 4 - National Partnerships
National Partnerships: The discussion on NSDS and MDG based National Plans was continued, with a view to engage these stakeholders to assist PICs. A presentation was made by Diane Quarles (SIDS Unit).

Session 5 – Regional and International Partnerships and Cooperation
Presentations were made on Regional Partnerships and some of the priorities of the region by Coral Pasisi (PIFS), Dominique Benzaken (SPREP), Russell Howorth (SOPAC) and Vili Fuavao (FAO). Statements were made by FSM, Nauru, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia.

Session 6 – Integrated International Approach Illustration using the CSD 14/15 Theme
Consideration of integrated approaches to the implementation of the MSI – linkages and synergies between sectors, using the themes for CSD14/15 as example (climate change, energy, atmosphere and industrial development).
DESA moderated a discussion on the linkages and synergies between these sectors, with a view to utilizing the outcome of this discussion as critical input to the special SIDS report to CSD-14 and to future CSD sessions, as well as to other UN meetings and conferences. A presentation was made by Espen Ronneberg, Inter-Regional Advisor for SIDS.

Session 7 - Conclusion of the meeting
Consideration was given to the meeting's report as presented by the Rapporteur. The meeting adopted the decisions and recommendations contained in the summary as listed in the above report. Statements of thanks were made by Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Fiji and DESA. The Chairman declared the meeting closed.

Enclosure 2
Pacific Regional Meeting to follow up implementation of the Mauritius Strategy

Outcome Statement

1 We, representatives of Pacific SIDS, (Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu), together with Timor-Leste met in Apia, 17-19th October to review progress with commencing implementation in and for our countries of the Mauritius Strategy (MS).

2 In accordance with UN GA Res59/311, we reaffirmed that the MS, JPoI, MDGs and other international instruments, together with the Pacific Plan, and other regional policies, frameworks and action plans and partnership initiatives, are instruments available to assist us at the national level.

3 We reaffirmed our efforts to establish an enabling environment to support sustainable development.

4 We reaffirmed the urgent need to simplify the processes for accessing financial and technical resources to support our efforts to support sustainable development.

5 We agreed that at international level:
- Pacific SIDS must market their special needs in all international fora in regard to implementing the MS for harmonization of development partner support.
- Agencies within the UN system are urged to improve coordination and collaboration with each other and Pacific regional organizations, in their support to the Pacific SIDS.
- The forthcoming Inter-Regional SIDS Meeting in Rome, 15-16th November, provides an opportunity to engage with the international community to secure necessary resources in support of a programmatic approach to development. UNDESA should target this as a key objective of that upcoming meeting.
- The Pacific has agreed partnerships and regional policies/strategies that could provide good platforms to market Pacific SIDS needs.

6 We agreed that at regional level:
- The CROP sustainable development working group, in consultation with other regional organizations will, by the end of 2005, develop a Pacific SIDS matrix in order to integrate the internationally and regionally agreed commitments, in particular the MS and the Pacific Plan.
- To improve the effectiveness and service delivery to member countries, CROP agencies are urged to strengthen collaboration and harmonisation of their activities.

7 We agreed that at national level, the following urgent actions must be nationally driven and nationally owned, inclusive of all stakeholders, be community-focused and based, and utilize a joint-programming initiative.

- To mainstream the MS, including through the developing and implementing NSDS, or equivalent process.
- To use the Pacific SIDS matrix to assist us with our sustainable development actions.
- To integrate efforts of all the UN agencies (including the upcoming GEF country consultations, and UN country team planning, the UNDESA Italy Project and the development of a matrix for implementation of the MS) into national sustainable development actions, and including the assistance being provided by CROP.
- To integrate the support from multilateral and bilateral development partners with these actions.

8 We acknowledge the participation of Timor-Leste and encourage them to make use of this statement and the outcomes report of this meeting to assist them with their sustainable development efforts.

9 We acknowledged and expressed our appreciation to the Government of Samoa for hosting the meeting, UNDESA SIDS Unit for convening the meeting, to the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, CROP organizations, the UNDP Samoa Office, the ESCAP Pacific Office, FAO and UNESCO Subregional Offices and UNCTAD, for their support and participation.

Apia, 19 October 2005